

STUMBLING BLOCKS.

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A stumbling block is something that is in your way. Something which you are liable to fall over. As we pass through this life we find a great many of these stumbling blocks which persons are liable to stumble over. They are of various kinds. Even persons become such. They get in the way of others and tempt them by their actions to do wrong. The greatest stumbling blocks we meet with are those who make great professions and do not live right. They are ever ready to teach others but their own hearts are far from right.

Church stumbling blocks are those who profess to be Christians and yet have not the spirit of Christ. They have tried to march to heaven in their own strength, and have fallen by the way and others stumble over them and some fall. If they had gone out on the march with the strength of the Lord they would not be stumbling blocks for the Lord would not let them fall. He hath said in the 91st Psalm, "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in thy ways. And they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Therefore it behooves us to walk in the faith of Christ lest we fall short of doing his will and lose the promise. We can readily perceive that if we walk in the proper faith we shall not stumble, that the angels will keep watch over us and lead us in the right paths.

Now the way to be rid of these stumbling blocks that we may redeem the world for Jesus, is to begin with the children. There is not much hope for the aged in sin, but convert the children and there will be few old stumbling blocks.

The children are the hope of our nation, our church and our temperance cause. Then if we lead them to walk in the faith of Christ, they will not stand aloof as stumbling blocks for the world to stumble over and go down to ruin.

The ways in which we may stumble are various. We will attempt to name and discuss a few, such as: When we are idle, when we lie, when we steal, when we are busy-bodies, when we indulge in strong drink to excess or intemperate in any way, when we are covetous, when we kill, and many others.

Idleness, then, is never alone but hath a long tail of other vices hanging on which corrupt and infect the whole man, after such sort that he is made at length but a lump of sin. St. Bernard calls it "The mother of all evil, and the stepdame

of all virtues." When once you have stumbled into the path of idleness, satan and his followers are always ready to set in his foot, and to plant blocks of wickedness and sin to the everlasting destruction of man's soul. In thirteenth Matthew we are taught, "That while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." This sleep has reference to idleness. We learn from this, that when one has stumbled into this road, all other obstacles are easily fallen over because there is a force at work upon us.

A liar is also a very great stumbrer; for when a lie is once told it is like a snowball, "the longer it is rolled the larger it is." The damage done thereby may be great. For this reason then it would not be well for any one to stumble into the path of the liar.

As for stealing and being busy-bodies are equally as great.

Intemperance is one among the greatest evils bringing men's souls to destruction by its awful curse. One man's soul may not only be ruined but he will cause many others to stumble by tempting them to indulge, when perhaps, they have been taught better by a pious Christian mother. Not only do those who indulge have to suffer, but they inflict such suffering and misery upon the women and children which is almost unbearable; causing them many times to fill an untimely grave.

Our anger is very apt to cause us to stumble many times, when if we had control of ourselves we might quell our angry passion and save that evil thought or deed which has been said or committed while in anger. Also save the pain that has been inflicted upon others and upon ourselves.

It is easier to forbear stealing other men's goods than it is to covet or desire them. But it is covetousness that leads to stealing.

One stumble leads to another until finally the life of a fellow-man has been taken, and the soul of the stumbler sinks to everlasting punishment.

Since we as Christians are to set an example for the world, let us then avoid all those evil propensities and lead such a life that we may serve as a light-house to all.

We must not, as Christians, only cease from doing evil but learn to do good. The gospel does not contemplate a mere life of negation, it requires the most positive and active form of right doing as well as right living.

In order that we may understand the right doing, we must have that faith which will help us to lead a pure life. Faith is the divinity of works, and is so spread throughout the works of the faithful as is

the divinity throughout the humanity of Christ.

Through faith we do good works, through good works faith is visible and comprehensible.

Then let us not place ourselves as stumbling blocks before the world, but rather to use our influence. Every one has some influence either for good or evil. We as Christians should try to use our influence that others may profit. A thought may be expressed, a word spoken in season to one in great perplexity, or an act performed in an opportune moment, the influence of which may make itself felt somewhere in years to come, and at places far remote from where the incident occurred. Or it may have been noble and elevating and led a doubter to firmness of faith and to become a champion for the truth as it is in Jesus. Or it may have been a kind and generous act which you have performed, and relieved someone from distress and misery. No one can properly estimate his influence. It may be as the vessel, plowing the bosom of a placid lake two miles from shore. The screw churns the water into foam leaving a wake which marks its course for many rods. You stand upon the low beach contemplating the mirror-like water and the vessel. Presently waves begin to touch the shore and now, before you seem aware of it, your shoes are wet, although the lake a few moments ago was calm and there is no breeze. The influence of the distant vessel, now out of sight around you promontory, has reached the shore. So is the influence of the Christians. After he has disappeared from view on earth his work of faith and love go on until it touches the shores of eternity.

Tiosa, Ind.

Home Circle.

A GENTLEMAN.

I knew him for a gentleman
By signs that never fail;
His coat was rough and rather worn,
His cheeks were thin and pale—
A lad who had his way to make,
With little time for play;
I knew him for a gentleman
By certain signs to-day.

He met his mother on the street;
Off came his little cap.
My door was shut; he waited there
Until I heard his rap.
He took the bundle from my hand,
And when I dropped my pen,
He sprang to pick it up for me—
This gentleman of ten.

He does not push and crowd along;
His voice is gently pitched;
He does not fling his books about
As if he were bewitched.
He stands aside to let you pass;
He always shuts the door.